Civil Society and Religion
Contributions of Christianity to Civil Society through Education - a Sociological Study in Dakshina Kannada

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Introduction

Capitalism, globalisation, liberalisation, privatisation and control from international bodies have put the State under pressure. To cope with the international pressures the State often goes with the interest of the industries and corporate agencies that control the economy and market. In the bargain, the interest of the majority is compromised. It is here, that the role of civil society is considered very critical in upholding the ideals of equity, justice, people-centred development, people's participation in governance, human rights, transparency and accountability. Civil society has the potential to give voice to the unheard voices of the society. Civil society has vast terrain. Due to its diverse nature limiting the scope of civil society becomes problematic. Every person is a potential contributor to civil society. At the same time, human beings can do much more when they come together and work in groups.

The human person has always lived in a network of relationships. In a relationship there are gains and at the same time, there are responsibilities. As they live in society, there are individual responsibilities as well as collective responsibilities. Collective responsibility in society is carried out in and through organised groups. It can either organise itself within a closed group of a community/religion by excluding others or it can also look beyond and be inclusive involving persons from all walks of life. This led people to join voluntary associations going beyond caste, religious, linguistic, and ethnic affinity. There also emerged associations based on religion, caste, language, ethnicity, profession. All of them constitute civil society because of their involvement in the lives of people in general and their concerns.

In a multi-cultural, multi-religious, multi-linguistic, multi-ethnic society, however, some groups feel oppressed and dominated by other groups and even by the

state itself. There is a constant struggle to preserve the group's identity, through freedom, justice, greater participation in socio-economic and political life, empowerment and equality. When the state fails in its responsibility to attend to people's needs, they find their way in fighting against the above mentioned struggles with the help and support of groups and individuals who are concerned about the happenings among and around them.

Social engagement through association is an important element in civil society. As social beings, we relate to each other. We choose to be members of some associations to express our social belonging. This is not merely for personal benefit but to contribute to the human community as well (Chandhoke 1995: 34). Voluntary associations are one of the strongest tools at the disposal of any civil society group (Civicus 2005: 30). They help to transcend the private interests of the individual since they bring otherwise self-centred individuals to participate in programmes of social concern. It is through social associations that civil society is strengthened to take up activities of common interest (Chandhoke 2012: 41).

Educational institutions are one among many contributors of civil society that play a crucial role in forming responsible, sensitive, socially conscious citizens. Our country with a legacy of secularism and pluralism would greatly benefit from such citizens. How do we bring these service-oriented values to our youth through our education? The present study is an attempt to see how religion (in this study it is Christianity) contributes to promoting civil society through higher educational institutions in Dakshina Kannada.

Multi-dimensional Nature of Civil Society

Civil society has become a widely used term today. All individuals are connected in civil society by way of economic, political, cultural, social, religious and educational influence they exercise on each other. This connectedness invites them to participate and respond to situations, events and happenings of the society. Even though the concept of civil society has become prominent in the social sciences, it remains somewhat unclear and even contested in terms of its actual meanings and uses. Civil society comes to mean different things in different traditions and, as such, there cannot be one single universal understanding of civil society.

Civil society is a dynamic space and it is relatively free from the state, economy and family. It has a voluntary aspect since it emerges as a voluntary initiative to strengthen the rights of individuals and communities. The participatory nature of civil society is evident in people's undertaking of the common good and participation in governance. The democratic nature of civil society is represented in its attempt to form a public space through which it strengthens democratic polity. Civil society is expected to uphold certain values in a society particularly human rights when they are violated. It creates space from where undemocratic practices and unethical values are criticized (Patrick 2019: 12).

CIVICUS, an international non-profit organization, which aims to strengthen civil society and citizen action around the world, gives an idea of the values that are espoused by civil society include justice and equality, where all people are free to exercise their rights as citizens; reciprocity and respect; knowledge; vision; and principled courage, through which CIVICUS strives to promote civil justice and conducts its activities in a manner that honours the values of democratic civil society (Anheier and Stefan 2009: 165).

Some of the areas how civil society contributes to making society democratic has been pointed out by Diamond (2004). These include monitoring abuse of state power; stimulating political participation; developing attributes such as tolerance, moderation, compromise, respect for opposing points of view; it is a channel to articulate and represent the interests of diverse sections of the population; voluntary associations that transcend fault lines such as region, religion, class, and ethnicity; disseminate useful information to the public about important public issues; helping to achieve economic reforms; strengthening the emerging democratic state (Kastrati 2016: 67). Elshtain (1999**)** highlights the need for civil society associations that can help in a democratic society and in fighting moral deterioration. He also lists some qualities which are seedbeds of civic virtues – qualities like compassion, honesty, trust, cooperation, personal responsibility, respect for others- which are not enforced by law rather by the family, good local community or neighbourhood, faith communities, voluntary civic organizations, art institutions, education and media.

By instilling and fostering values and attitudes towards social commitment the civil society can contribute towards the common good of society (Ferrari 2011). It is in civil society that an individual comes to realize his sociability. At the same time, this is the sphere in which an individual also learns the value of group action, social solidarity, and the dependence of his welfare on others, which educates him for citizenship and prepares him for participation in political life (Chandhoke1995: 34). Aijaz-Ul-Haq (2015: 7) acknowledges the efforts of civil society in enabling secure conditions for people especially the weaker and marginalised and in guaranteeing equal opportunities for all. Mukherjee (2003: 511) highlights the moral obligation of human beings. This also calls us to be responsible citizens that include responsibility towards oneself, towards other human beings, and towards the community.

Education and Civil Society

Education makes sense only when it has participation in social life. Without reference to social life, the end of education cannot be realised i.e. harmonious development of all the powers of the individual. Unless the institution reproduces within itself the qualitative dimension of civil society or values of civil society, it does not prepare students for social life. It is through social engagement that students can be equipped for social life.

John (1996) highlights how civic values are being taught in the educational institutions of American society through social involvement. The author points out the cooperative learning (students learning in smaller groups) and service learning (students learning something by doing good for their community) together that are making rounds in American society. Sharma and Sylila (2016), have shown how social and ecological sensitivity through education among the university students of New Zealand, was effective in bringing social transformation. D'Souza (2015), has shown the social commitment of two city colleges in Mumbai, namely St Xavier's College and Sophia College. Both colleges are known for excellence and value-based education. They encourage student-centric policies. They support holistic development with a social dimension. Cyril (1997) brings out the efforts of a school in teaching values through experience. The author has highlighted some of the programmes adopted by Loreto Day School in Culcutta. Programmes like Drop in Programme, Child to Child Rural Programme, Rainbow (street) Children Programme, Barefoot Teaching Training Programme were experimented to teach the children values through experience.

Various aspects of civil society were highlighted in the above sections. Some of the components like social consciousness, character formation, democratic principles,

empowerment, social engagement, acceptance of others and upholding human rights that go in the making of civil society need to be taught, learnt, fostered and nurtured. The present study helps us to know how these components of civil society were promoted and are being promoted in the selected Christian educational institutions.

A Working Definition of Civil Society

Civil society consists of "individuals and groups from different backgrounds relating to each other around collective interests for the common good."

The collective interest has two dimensions. The first is in terms of attitude - respect for human life and dignity; cooperation among the people; critical thinking and discussion on issues affecting the people; tolerance, appreciating diverse cultures, religious diversity; service of humanity; caring and sharing; empowerment and welfare of people. The second includes active involvement - in fighting against injustice, discrimination, exploitation, inequality, violence, bias against certain sections of people, communal conflicts and corruption. The study focuses on both the dimensions, in the context of the institutional environment and the educational activities in the Christian educational institutions.

Need for the Study

Education is one of the important agents in civil society. It is capable of enforcing the qualities required for a civil society. There were no studies to show how educational institutions have been fostering some of the important aspects of civil society in their students. This study is intended to know how Christian institutions in Dakshina Kannada contributed to civil society sociologically. Further, the study also highlights the contributions of the Christian community to the society of Dakshina Kannada.

Statement of the Problem

Religion has been an integral component of every society and has shaped human thinking and consequently civil society. Sociologically it is beneficial to see how religion (in this study it refers to Christianity) contributes to civil society through educational activities. Therefore, the study has been defined as **Civil Society and Religion: Contributions of Christianity to Civil Society through Education- a Sociological Study in Dakshina Kannada.** When the statement says Contributions of Christianity to Civil Society through Education it focuses on the contribution of Christian educational institutions with a special reference to higher educational institutions.

Objectives of the Study

The main objective of this study is to understand the contribution of Education to Civil Society in Christian Higher Educational institutions of Dakshina Kannada. Within this perspective the specific objectives are:

1. To study the nature of educational activities in Christian institutions.
2. To look at the ethical dimension of education in Christian Educational Institutions.
3. To study the contribution of Christian higher Educational Institutions to civil society.
4. To analyse the impact of education on civil society in Dakshina Kannada.

Review of Literature

Civil Society in India

The enhancing of citizens' participation which was taken up seriously in the Western democracies due to discourses on civil society and totalitarian regimes of socialist societies stirred interest in civil society in India. The failure of the Indian state to achieve social, economic, political democracy further added to the country's interest towards it (Behar and Aseem 2004: 201). The civil society got momentum in the 1960s and 70s in India due to two factors namely, an increasingly centralized state on the one hand and the failure of the state to substantively democratize Indian society on the other. This helped to galvanize civil society to work towards countering the hegemonic tendencies of the state and secure the socio-economic rights of the marginalized (Lowry 2008).

Most of the Indian theorists see civil society as a fluid association of social groupings, based on caste and kinship linkages or religious mobilizations as much as on voluntary associations (Chandhoke 1995: 28). Because of such ambiguities any study of civil society in India becomes challenging. Various complexities make Indian civil society distinct yet confused, strong but vulnerable, secular but at the same time linked with religious identities, private but becoming public (Wilfred 2006). Further, we see innumerable ad-hoc initiatives that make Indian civil society vibrant and at the same time complex.

Civil Society in Dakshina Kannada

The civil society movement in Dakshina Kannada has a historical base. The Portuguese and British rule, the Basel Mission activities, social reform movements and freedom fighters' movement have shaped and reshaped the civil society and their movements at different times. Many individuals and communities have played an

important role in shaping civil society organizations in the district. The earliest involvement of civil society to bring about social transformation was seen in education and social reforms. Thus we see Hindus, Christians, Muslims and others starting religion-based civil society groups to help their communities. Later the scope of civil society got extended to other people in society. The traces of civil society are seen in voluntary social service organizations. The number of voluntary associations started by the various religious communities during the colonial period and the involvement of these voluntary associations in social, educational, religious activities changed the functional character of the district (Rai 2003). How civil society, social movements, and NGOs have responded to issues of development, sustainability, and social justice in Dakshina Kannada is brought out by Anthony (2017).

The Decline of Civil Society

The decline of morals, social values, and social capital taking place in society is a serious concern for children, parents, educational institutions, and citizens (Meyer 2000: 4). Traces of declining civil space in India is noted by Dhanagare (2005: 60). There is a debacle of institutions such as parliament, economy, industry, banking, trade, education, sports, or co-operatives. The growing intolerance, especially towards minorities, despite ethnic and cultural plurality; lack of communication, discussion, or debates on public issues among the people who differ in background, ideology; weakening capacity for conflict resolution have been highlighted by the author.

According to Tocqueville, in the Western world, people are less willing to contribute to the common good. The practice of joining some forces spontaneously and voluntarily has been on the decline. The bond of trust people shared and the standard of civility that connected people has weakened. The shared sense that they had towards the

community and the obligation towards it seems to have eroded (Meyer 2000: 3). Civil society was the sphere for humanity that was governed by responsibility, trust, fraternity, solidarity, and love. But such a civil society has ceased to exist today because civil associations are failing to attract the involvement of ordinary citizens **(**Wuthnow 1996: 11). Based on the European Social Survey, Wallace and Florian (2009: 271) say that there is a decline in participation into voluntary associations. From the available data, the authors have analysed how factors such as gender, age, education, work status, occupational class and area of living affect one's participation in civil society. The extent of participation of men and women, rural and urban, depends upon the type of associations because in some associations men are active whereas in some women are active.

Civil society and Christianity in India

In India, the Church's presence in civil society is seen in and through its welfare and service activities. Gonsalves and Antony (2009: 17) noted efforts of the church in realising individual autonomy in the Indian context which is an essential aspect of civil society. The Indian society which was predominantly caste-ridden and patriarchy denied individual autonomy and equality. By introducing female education, mass education where there was no discrimination based on gender, caste, or religion, the Christianity helped for a free and open society. Similarly, the modern medicines which were encouraged by missionaries reached all sections of society. It helped people to see sickness as not being a divine curse or due to karma as it was believed but helped them to free themselves from these and other false beliefs about the human body. They began to treat the human body with respect.

Patrick (2006) developed the idea of the church as a civil society. There are several ways in which the church could act as a civil society in practice. Some of the ways where the Indian church could become an active player in civil society included interrogating the reality of caste, supporting the social movements, active involvement in media and education by disseminating critical and unbiased information, promoting secularism, building up the nation, empowering the subalterns and constructing an emancipatory identity for the oppressed.

Christianity in Dakshina Kannada

There are quite a few books and research studies providing information on the spread, growth, development of Christianity, and its contribution to the district of Dakshina Kannada. Pinto (2000) considered the arrival of Christianity as a historical event for the people of this region. Their contribution through education, efforts to free people from superstitions and educating them about evil practices through knowledge by using the printing press, changed life in Dakshina Kannada. The contributions from the Christian community to social service, in the medical field, in setting up charitable institutions helped in the social development of the region. They improved the economic life of the people by introducing various industries. Prabhakar (1988) has highlighted the contributions of missionaries to the spread of education, health service and economic activities, and points out their efforts to the empowerment of men and women in the district of Dakshina Kannada.

Education

The social aim of education is to inculcate social qualities and social feelings and social responsibilities in children. Educational sociologists emphasize education for citizenship, social efficiency, democracy, equality, cultural progress, and leadership.

Education is also responsible for forming democratic and critically discerning citizens. Creating people of critical inquiry, persons of balanced views, committed to the cause of a just and egalitarian society is the responsibility of the educational system. Education is important for making people active citizens. Active citizenship is the foundation on which civil society is built and can survive. Dewey (2014: 12) a great educationist said that it was only by engaging in social life one prepared one's students for social life. Education has to form habits of social usefulness and serviceableness.

Society considers educational institutions as the most reliable medium to prepare citizens who sustain democratic values. Therefore, it is the task of educational institutions to convince young people that their future depends upon the vision they have towards values like freedom, equality and justice. At the same time, young people also need to grow in societal values that can benefit the individual as well the community (Gruda and Tonin 1999: 550). In a pluralistic society like India, teaching fundamental human values that transcend religion, culture or ethnic community must be regarded as obligatory. It is important to teach our students to treat others with respect and dignity. Sen (2011:106) also talked about the need of teaching children the value and purpose of social cohesion. Education also should teach students how to manage the differences. Living in a pluralistic society demands that we respect the differences. Thus education has to prepare young minds to live and to cope effectively in this pluralistic world.

Christian Contribution to Education

Christianity in general and the Catholic Church in particular share in the responsibility of serving society in diverse ways. Catholic Directory of India 2013 gives statistical data for the Catholic institutions in India. There are a total of 15, 781

educational institutions including 449 professional colleges and 232 degree colleges. Most of these are in remote and rural areas, imparting education to all irrespective of caste, creed or religion, especially marginalized sections like SC, ST, OBC, minorities, women, children, disabled and poor. Thus contributing to the progress and development of this country. Even though many individuals, groups and philanthropists have been carrying out this task of education along with the state, the educational institutions managed by the Christians have been recognized for their singular contribution.

Education in Dakshina Kannada

The credit for pioneering education work in Dakshina Kannada must go to Basel Mission. Formal schools did not exist in the district till Basel Missionaries reached here. They opened a school in Mangalore in the year 1836 just two years after their arrival (Lobo 2002: 403). First high school called Basel Mission High School was established in 1838 (Fernandes 2006). The second half of the 19th century saw further developments taking place in Dakshina Kannada. Soon after the Basel Mission established educational institutions, several other groups like the Apostolic Carmel Society and the Jesuits belonging to the Catholic community, Gowda Saraswat Brahmins and Madras Government also started educational institutions (Mohankrishna 2003: 206). The number of reputed educational institutions in the Dakshina Kannada district speaks of the exponential growth in the past 50 years.

Chapterisation

Chapter 1: Introduction- gives a general understanding of the research topics like religion, civil society, education, the interconnectedness between religion and civil society and the importance of education for a good civil society. Along with that the

statement of the problem, the significance of the study, objectives, methodology and chapterisation are discussed.

Chapter 2: Civil Society in Dakshina Kannada- a Profile highlights the demographic profile of Dakshina Kannada like population, sex ratio, literacy level, religious communities. History of Christianity, their attempt to be an integral part of Dakshina Kannada, the contribution of Basel Mission and Catholic community to the social welfare of the district, the contribution of Christian community to the growth of education, civil society organisations in Dakshina Kannada and a profile of educational institutions under study are considered in this chapter.

Chapter 3: Review of Literature –literature related to religion, civil society, education, religion and civil society, education and civil society, need for social engagement, civil society in India, civil society organisations in Dakshina Kannada, Christian contribution to education in general and Dakshina Kannada in particular gathered from books, journals, periodicals and electronic media is analysed and presented in the third chapter.

Chapter 4: Christian Educational Institutions and Civil Society in Dakshina Kannada- the data gathered from the respondents was put under statistical analysis to obtain mean, median, standard deviation. The results were used to draw tables and diagrams. The association between the demographic variables with values acquired, campus culture, character formation, social consciousness, democratic principles, social engagement, provisions for empowerment, acceptance of others, upholding human rights and future selection of the institution was determined using the chi-square test and Fisher's exact test. Correlation between the above-mentioned variables was measured using Karl Pearson Correlation Coefficient Test.

Chapter 5: Findings, Recommendations and Conclusion- the final chapter highlights major findings from the demographic profile, educational activities, ethical dimensions, social responsibility and outcome of educational activities in Christian educational institutions. Suggestions and recommendations were made for further study and conclusion was drawn.

Major findings

Demographic Profile of the Respondents

The demographic profile of age showed that the majority of the students (76.7%) were in the age group of 18 to 21 years. Religious affiliation of the respondents showed that the majority of the respondents were from the Hindu religion (43.6%) followed by the Christians (38.3). The profile for gender showed that the majority of the respondents were females (74.6%). This was not intentional. Therefore, it indicated the enrolment among females had increased in higher education. This was very much in tune with the All India Survey on Higher Education 2019- 20 report. The annual income category showed that the majority of the respondents (71.4%) had a family income below two lakhs fifty thousand. That fact confirmed that a majority of the students studying in these Christian institutions came from lower-income families. All the respondents had a minimum of one year of experience with the institution when they answered the questionnaire. The majority of them (79.4%) had an association of 1 to 3 years with the institution. All three major streams, namely science, arts and commerce- management, had proportional representation. The majority of the students now pursuing their education in Christian institutions had come from schools that were managed by the Christians (52%). The second largest group (21.6%) was drawn from government-managed schools.

Values Acquired

The encouragement received in the institution to grow in their leadership qualities was the most highlighted value by the respondents. On the other hand, respondents had not seen values such as equal respect to all religions, promoting an attitude of caring and sharing, respecting human dignity and developing their thinking skills sufficiently highlighted in the institutions. At the personal level, thinking about the good of every individual was the value acquired by the majority of the respondents. The overall assessment for the level of values acquired in their institution was 'moderate' among the majority of the respondents.

The analysis of demographic variables with the values acquired showed that there was an association with variables like- religion, family income and stream of education. The variable 'religion' showed that the influence of the institution in acquiring values was better among the Christian respondents. The variable 'the annual income of the family' showed that the influence of the institution was greater on the respondents with higher income. The variable, stream of education, showed that the respondents from science and arts streams had a better influence of the institution on the values acquired.

Campus Culture

The majority of the respondents chose the college, primarily, for the value-based education provided in the Christian institutions. Students' general perception of the institution revealed that a majority of them saw their institution as one that provided space for the personal growth of the individual. The majority of the respondents also appreciated their campus for providing opportunities in co-curricular and extra-

curricular activities that shaped their value system. It was observed that a large majority (86.4%) of the students acknowledged that the institutions held programmes on national integration and religious harmony so that students could learn to appreciate social and religious diversity. Responses also made it clear that the campus needed to pay serious attention to upholding human rights-related issues. Data showed that a majority of the respondents assessed the campus culture in their institutions as 'moderate'.

The analysis of demographic variables with campus culture showed that there was an association with variables education and annual income. The variable education showed that science and arts streams respondents appreciated campus culture more than respondents of commerce - management stream. The variable annual income of the family showed that the higher the income, the better appreciation for the campus culture. In other words, the lower-income group is not very much impressed by the campus culture.

Correlation Coefficient Test for Educational Activities

Karl Pearson's correlation coefficient test was administered to see the correlation between campus culture and the level of values acquired. The result showed a strong positive correlation between the two. This shows whenever there is a positive campus culture the level of acquired values by the students is greater.

Character Formation

The majority of the students agreed and strongly agreed (92%) with the fact that the institutions had inspiring teachers who as role models motivated the students. Similarly, the majority of the respondents (94%), agreed or strongly agreed that their institution gave importance to the formation of the moral character of the students. The

statement that ‘the institution aimed at preparing leaders with ethical values and personal integrity’ was agreed or strongly agreed by the majority (92%). The overall assessment about the level of character formation in their institution was ‘very high’. Only a very small percentage said that the level of character formation was ‘moderate’.

Results for demographic variables and character formation showed variables gender and education had significant association. An equal percentage among males and females stated the institutional environment in the character formation of the students to be ‘very high’. When it came to the stream of education, the students of the science stream were less happy about the institutional environment in the character formation of the students when compared to the respondents of arts and commerce streams.

Social Consciousness

The institution’s efforts in developing social consciousness among the students have been acknowledged by the majority of the respondents (83%). This was done mainly through exposure activities and extra-curricular activities and least through classroom or academic activities. It was acknowledge by a majority (77%) of the students that their understanding of society and issues affecting their lives had broadened due to the regular interactions with thinkers and intellectuals invited by the institutions. In developing social consciousness, the role played by the peer group was amazing. The majority of the respondents (82%) stated that the students discussed social issues affecting society. The overall assessment showed the level of social consciousness among the respondents to be ‘high’.

Association between demographic variables and social consciousness was measured by using the chi-square test and we observed a significant association for

variables- education, religion and annual family income. The variable education showed that a higher percentage of respondents from the arts stream appreciated the institutional environment as a helping factor in the formation of social consciousness among the students. The variable, religion, showed that respondents from the Christian religion saw a favourable environment in the institution for the formation of social consciousness among the students. The demographic variable 'annual income of the family' showed that higher income groups were more appreciative of the institutional environment that helped in the formation of social consciousness.

Support to Democratic Principles

The study showed that a majority of the respondents (80%) either strongly agreed or agreed that the institutions respected each one's religious beliefs and practices. The majority (91%) of the respondents either agreed or strongly agreed that the institutions helped in the development of the skill of listening and following one's conscience. The provision of a grievance redressal system in the institutions is said to be effective according to a majority of the respondents (83%). The majority of the respondents (71%) were appreciative of the availability of the teachers which helped the students to approach them for any help. On the other hand, there were serious concerns on matters such as the absence of critical thinking among staff and students, staff and students not engaging in discussion on issues affecting society. The overall assessment in receiving support for democratic principles in the institutions was said to be 'high'.

The association between demographic variables and support to democratic principles was measured using Fisher's exact test. This showed a significant association with the variable 'stream of education'. The result showed that the students of the arts

stream were more appreciative of the institutional environment that had been encouraging democratic principles.

Correlation Coefficient Test for Ethical Dimensions in Educational Institutions

The results for character formation showed a positive correlation it had with campus culture and acquired values. That indicates, in the character formation of the students, a good campus and values acquired are essential. The formation of social consciousness showed a positive correlation with character formation, campus culture and values acquired. Support to democratic principles provided in the institutions had a positive correlation with the formation of social consciousness, values acquired and campus culture.

Social Engagement

The majority of the respondents (91%) acknowledged the efforts on the part of the institution to organize social outreach programmes that helped the students in social engagement. The study revealed that a majority of the respondents (78%) expressed that the institution provided opportunities to involve in issues affecting marginalised people (those on the margins of society). Discussing issues with public authorities (18%) and writing about the issues that affect marginalised people (11%) were the less preferred choices. This is a matter of concern. The overall assessment showed a ‘moderate’ level of social engagement among the respondents.

Association between demographic variables and social engagement showed variables religion, annual income of the family, education and gender had significant association. The variable, religion, showed that social engagement was higher among the Christian respondents. The variable, annual income of the family, showed more

respondents in the income group of two lakhs fifty thousand to five lakh were involved in social engagement activities. The variable, stream of education, showed that more respondents from the arts stream were involved in social engagement activities. The variable, gender, showed social engagement was better among the females compared to males.

Provision for Empowerment

The study showed the institution's commitment to educate economically poor students. The majority of the respondents (89%) either agreed or strongly agreed with this. The majority of the respondents (84%) expressed that the education they acquired in the institution was a great help in reducing social inequality. Responses showed that the majority of the students (89%) believed that the education provided in their institutions helped in economic empowerment (capacity for self-employment or competency to take up any job). The level of provisions for empowerment was perceived to be 'high' by the majority.

Association between demographic variables and empowerment showed that the variable religion had a significant association. Students from the Christian religion were appreciative of the provisions made available for the empowerment of the students.

Correlation Coefficient Test for Social Responsibility in the Institution

By using Karl Pearson's correlation coefficient test, the correlation between variables was measured. The results for social engagement showed a positive correlation with the formation of social consciousness, values acquired and campus culture. The provisions for empowerment in the institution showed a positive correlation with the formation of social consciousness, campus culture and support for democratic principles.

Acceptance of the Other

The study showed that the majority of the respondents (90%) held the view that having multiple religions benefitted the society of Dakshina Kannada. 70 percent of the respondents stated that discriminating against people based on caste or religion went against their value system. The majority of the respondents (74%) did not believe in the superiority of their religion. However, one-fourth of the respondents were of the view that their religion was superior to other religions. The overall assessment of the level of acceptance of the other was 'high' among the majority of the respondents (75%).

The association between demographic variables and acceptance of the other showed a significant association for variables annual income, education and age of the respondents. The variable annual income of the family showed that the level of acceptance of the other was better among respondents with income between two lakhs fifty thousand to five lakhs. The variable education showed that respondents from arts steam had a better acceptance of the other and the variable age, showed that respondents in the age group of 22 to 25 years were better in the level of acceptance of the other.

Upholding Human Rights

The study has shown that the majority (58%) of the students responded when human rights were violated. At the same time, it was also observed that over 42 percent of the respondents did not respond to situations when human rights were violated. At the personal level, the majority (81%) of the respondents preferred to protect human rights by upholding human dignity without discriminating the other based on their caste, religion or gender. The study revealed that the majority of the respondents did not

have membership in any associations outside the college. Only a small percentage (18%) among the respondents had membership in associations working for the welfare of people. The overall assessment of the respondents' level of involvement in upholding human rights was 'moderate' among the majority.

The association between the demographic variables and upholding human rights showed that the variables age, education and family income had significant association. The variable age showed those in the age group of 22 to 25 years to be having better involvement in upholding human rights. The variable stream of education showed that the level of involvement in upholding human rights was better in the case of arts stream respondents. The annual income of the family showed that respondents with an income of two lakhs fifty thousand to five lakhs were better involved in upholding human rights.

Correlation Coefficient Test for the outcome of Educational Activities

The attitude of acceptance of the other found in the respondents had a positive correlation predominantly with variables social engagement, values acquired and campus culture. Respondents showed a positive correlation predominantly with social engagement, values acquired and formation of social consciousness in their attempt to uphold human rights.

Future Selection of the Institution

The majority (85%) of the respondents expressed the intention of choosing a Christian educational institution in the future. Academic excellence was the most preferred reason for the choice of Christian institution among the respondents followed by the importance given to character formation. The overall assessment showed the

extent of selecting Christian institutions for future studies was ‘high’ among the majority of the respondents.

The association between the demographic variables and future selection of the institution showed a significant association for variables religion and type of institution for the higher secondary education. The variable, religion, showed that it was likely that Christian respondents preferred to choose Christian institutions in the future for the education of their family or relatives. The variable, type of institution for the higher secondary education showed that those respondents who had their previous education in Christian managed schools preferred Christian institutions for their family members or relatives.

Conclusion and Recommendations

Based on the findings of the study, a few recommendations for future studies are proposed:

- This study was conducted on the Christian institutions located in the Dakshina Kannada district. Similar studies may be extended to other districts, state and national levels.
- The present study was conducted on students of Christian institutions. A similar study can be carried out on institutions managed by other religions.
- Comparative study on the contributions of different religious groups to civil society can be useful.
- Few components of civil society are analysed in the present study. A qualitative study on civic virtues – qualities like compassion, honesty, trust, cooperation, personal responsibility, and respect for others among the youth can add depth to the subject of sociology.

- This study has focused educational aspect of civil society. Future studies can look into political participation among college going students.

From the findings of the study, some suggestions are proposed:

- The study shows a lack of sufficient encouragement for critical thinking. So it is recommended to modify the curriculum to include aspects of critical thinking in the syllabus and teaching methodology.
- The study also reveals that the students are looking forward to regular interactions with thinkers and intellectuals. Institutions need to pay attention to inviting people who can inspire and motivate the young so that students become socially engaged.
- The study observes poor membership in voluntary associations outside the college. Therefore, strengthening social movements in small groups could be considered in every Christian institution.
- The study notes that the values of appreciating diversity and respecting other religions were not very encouraging in the institutions despite programmes organised on national integration and religious harmony. Therefore, there is a need for promoting inter-faith programmes, use of religious texts from different religious traditions in the institution to appreciate diversity, treat everyone with respect without discrimination and to promote social harmony.
- There is a need for leaders with ethical values and personal integrity. Training more people in IAS, IPS, legal system and people in media with such integrity can be attended to by Christian institutions.
- The study also shows that young people have preferred to choose easy-going initiatives rather than risky ones. It is due to lack of confidence and knowledge.

More exposure to persons who could train students for social engagement activities can be planned.

When people live together in a society they interact with people of different backgrounds and social relations are formed. These interactions connect us leading to interconnectedness. In this process, we realize the need to join groups and associations that work for the well-being of the human community and promote the common good. This leads people to organise themselves in smaller and larger groups and involve in the issues, concerns, struggles of people. People's initiatives can proliferate when the State is democratic and not autocratic or dictatorial. A democratic State respects diversity, supports democratic principles, upholds the rights of the citizens. The principles of a democratic society, which are basic to civil society, need to be communicated to the masses. Education and educational institutions are powerful tools to communicate effectively the essential dimensions of civil society.

Educational institutions have a responsibility to foster democratic attitudes in the citizens in general and students in particular. Institutions of higher education are also called upon to provide a platform to bring people together, discuss, debate and act on issues that obstruct the common good. Education affects not only the person being educated but also the whole community. Education makes sense only when it has participation in social life. Education that has no relevance to social life and social issues is incomplete. Social engagement emphasizes the participatory nature of education. Through the engagement in social life, it is desired that the future citizens collectively contribute to the common good. But it is important to assess the kind of people education has produced; to assess whether education has helped in bringing about a civil society that can think critically, objectively and conscientiously. It is in this context the proposed study was undertaken.

The study reveals that in some dimensions of civil society, the institutions have done well and in others there is room for improvement. The importance given to character formation, efforts to develop social consciousness, support to democratic principles, provisions for empowerment in the institution, acceptance of the other has a 'high' level of rating among the respondents. In the case of growth in acquired values, campus culture, social engagement, and upholding human rights have received a 'moderate' level of score among the respondents. The overall assessment of the institutions by the respondents for the parameters used in the study is positive. This also becomes clear from their intention of choosing a Christian institution for their family or relatives in the future. The majority of the respondents have expressed their desire to be part of their alma mater.

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